

### Subpart F—Settlement; Prehearing Procedure

#### § 502.91 Opportunity for informal settlement.

(a) Parties are encouraged to make use of all the procedures of this part which are designed to simplify or avoid formal litigation, and to assist the parties in reaching settlements whenever it appears that a particular procedure would be helpful.

(b) Where time, the nature of the proceeding, and the public interest permit, all interested parties shall have the opportunity for the submission and consideration of facts, argument, offers of settlement, or proposal of adjustment, without prejudice to the rights of the parties.

(c) No stipulation, offer, or proposal shall be admissible in evidence over the objection of any party in any hearing on the matter. [Rule 91.]

(d) As soon as practicable after the commencement of any proceeding, the presiding judge shall direct the parties or their representatives to consider the use of alternative dispute resolution, including but not limited to mediation, and may direct the parties or their representatives to consult with the Federal Maritime Commission Alternative Dispute Resolution Specialist about the feasibility of alternative dispute resolution.

(e) Any party may request that a mediator or other neutral be appointed to assist the parties in reaching a settlement. If such a request or suggestion is made and is not opposed, the presiding judge will appoint a mediator or other neutral who is acceptable to all parties, coordinating with the Federal Maritime Commission Alternative Dispute Resolution Specialist. The mediator or other neutral shall convene and conduct one or more mediation or other sessions with the parties and shall inform the presiding judge, within the time prescribed by the presiding judge, whether the dispute resolution proceeding resulted in a resolution or not, and may make recommendations as to future proceedings. If settlement is reached, it shall be submitted to the presiding judge who shall issue an appropriate decision or ruling. All such

dispute resolution proceedings shall be subject to the provisions of subpart U.

(f) Any party may request that a settlement judge be appointed to assist the parties in reaching a settlement. If such a request or suggestion is made and is not opposed, the presiding judge will advise the Chief Administrative Law Judge who may appoint a settlement judge who is acceptable to all parties. The settlement judge shall convene and preside over conferences and settlement negotiations and shall report to the presiding judge within the time prescribed by the Chief Administrative Law Judge, on the results of settlement discussions with appropriate recommendations as to future proceedings. If settlement is reached, it shall be submitted to the presiding judge who shall issue an appropriate decision or ruling. [Rule 91].

[49 FR 44369, Nov. 6, 1984, as amended at 58 FR 38649, July 19, 1993; 64 FR 7808, Feb. 17, 1999; 66 FR 43513, Aug. 20, 2001]

#### § 502.92 [Reserved]

#### § 502.94 Prehearing conference.

(a)(1) Prior to any hearing, the Commission or presiding officer may direct all interested parties, by written notice, to attend one or more prehearing conferences for the purpose of considering any settlement under § 502.91, formulating the issues in the proceeding and determining other matters to aid in its disposition. In addition to any offers of settlement or proposals of adjustment, there may be considered the following:

- (i) Simplification of the issues;
- (ii) The necessity or desirability of amendments to the pleadings;
- (iii) The possibility of obtaining admissions of fact and of documents which will avoid unnecessary proof;
- (iv) Limitation on the number of witnesses;
- (v) The procedure at the hearing;
- (vi) The distribution to the parties prior to the hearing of written testimony and exhibits;
- (vii) Consolidation of the examination of witnesses by counsel;
- (viii) Such other matters as may aid in the disposition of the proceeding.